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New program recruits student to DE Directorate

by Eva Hendren, Directed Energy Directorate

KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE, N.M. — A college engineering student has joined the Air Force Research Laboratory for a summer in a new recruiting effort called the Air Force Officer Accession and Training Schools Technical Recruiting Internship Program.

Jonathan A. Hutton, a sophomore from the Rochester Institute of Tech, started in June as the newest member of the laser division at AFRL's Directed Energy Directorate. The new program is headed by the Air Force ROTC and is designed to recruit college sophomores and juniors at their colleges and universities. The ROTC detachment commanders recruit through the college and then forward those eligible to ROTC headquarters. If the candidates meet the criteria of the program, they are then hired into the Student Temporary Employment Program within the Air Force and assigned to an Air Force laboratory for ten weeks. At the conclusion of the 10 weeks, the interns are offered an opportunity to join the Air Force through their colleges with a $15,000/year scholarship.

Hutton learned of the program through a mass email sent to engineering students at Rochester advertising a career cooperative opportunity, or co-op. Since he met the criteria for the program, he entered the program and was assigned to the laboratory. Unfamiliar with ROTC or the Air Force, he had never considered a military career. The co-op program with the ROTC, however, has made the idea of an Air Force career a strong possibility.

Hutton is assigned to the Tactical Systems Branch in the laser division. The branch's work includes solid-state and semiconductor lasers, as well as infrared and mid-infrared technology for applications within the Air Force. He is paired with a mentor in the branch, Air Force 2nd Lt. Rob Hill. Hill is a fellow engineer who has been assigned to the directorate at Kirtland for the past year. His role in Hutton's 10 weeks is to provide guidance, instruction, and make Hutton's time here as educational and welcoming as possible.

Both Hutton and Hill agree that the most beneficial aspect of the co-op is the opportunity to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom in a hands-on setting. Although Hutton had prior lab experience through the college, he says it is "nice to see real-world conditions and applications" of what he has learned in a laboratory environment. @